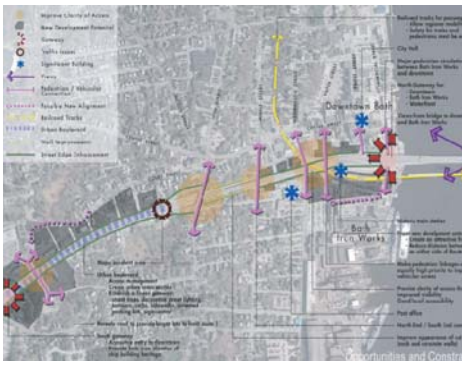
FEASIBILITY STUDY

BATH, MAINE ROUTE 1



Bath, Sagadahoc County, Maine

Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT)

2005

Project Type: Urban, 4-lane & 2-lane

PURPOSE

The aim of the Bath Feasibility Study was to identify a transportation master plan that improves traffic flow and the quality of life, while meeting the stated needs and objectives of MDOT and the City of Bath.

DESCRIPTION

The Bath Feasibility Study examined Route 1 from the Congress Avenue interchange to the Sagadahoc Bridge. The Study explored many possibilities for adding capacity to Route 1, to match the existing multilane roadway at both ends of the Route 1 viaduct.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

A key component of the Bath Feasibility Study was public involvement. The outreach program included several public forums including a public goal-setting workshop, a public informational meeting and briefings to the City Council. In addition, a Steering Committee, consisted of civic/business leaders and citizens representing diverse interests, was formed in mid-May of 2003. The Steering Committee offered advice to the Study Team and participated in one of the first tasks of the Study, the creation of a Purpose and Need statement. A website was also developed as part of the public involvement process.

CONTEXT SENSITIVE SOLUTIONS APPROACH

Five evaluation parameters were developed to assess each of the "Build Options":

- Transportation Service: Each Build Option was examined to determine whether it satisfied the transportation component of the Feasibility Study Purpose and Need Statement.
- Compatibility with Other Transportation Improvements: Each Build
- Option was examined to determine if it may or may not be physically and functionally combined with other Transportation Improvements.
- Community Conditions: Natural resource, social, cultural, and economic considerations were evaluated at a "fatal flaw" level to determine the degree

of opportunity, constraint and challenge to each Build Option. Fatal flaw is a condition where an impact might be significant or could not be mitigated.

- Community Objectives: Build Options were evaluated to determine their compatibility with the community's vision and objectives.
- Cost: Preliminary costs were estimated to assess financial feasibility of the Build Options.

OUTCOME

Public meetings and Steering Committee meetings will be held in the next month to review study findings and present the Preferred Alternative. Recent inspections of the Route 1 Viaduct have indicated that the viaduct is not as structurally deficient as initially thought, and therefore its structural life has been extended for another 10 years.

CHALLENGES

Within the Study Area, Route 1 is a four-lane controlled access highway which narrows to a two-lane viaduct approaching the Sagadahoc Bridge over the Kennebec River.

- Traffic connections between Route 1 and the downtown area are limited.
- The current location of the rail line interrupts traffic flow on local roads.
- Summer tourist traffic causes congestion on Route 1.
- Traffic problems occur during shift changes at Bath Iron Works (BIW), one of Maine's largest employers.

FUNDING

Funding source is yet to be determined.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Public workshops worked well, with significant participation from a broad spectrum of the public, and they were all very insightful regarding how they wanted to see Route 1 be redesigned in relation to the Historic Bath Downtown.
- Introducing cross sections and perspectives as part of the handout materials at each meeting was positive, it helped the Steering Committee visualize what each option could look like in the context of the surrounding urban fabric.
- Having a Steering Committee sit in a semi-circle worked well, because it made everyone feel like they were equally important. There was no chairperson, so it was more informal, but that worked well.
- Clearly understand project priority. A shift in priority of a project "mid-stream" makes it very difficult to keep the public engaged and excited when there is significant "down time" between public meetings, presentations, etc.

KEY WORDS

Applicable Project Delivery Stages: Administration, Planning, Design

Applicable Transportation Professionals: Highway Engineers, Structural Engineers, Urban Planners, Landscape Architects

Applicable Transportation Modes: Highway, Transit, Bicycle, Pedestrian

Transportation Topics: Visual Quality, Environmental Justice, Safety, Mobility, Geometrics, Context Sensitive Solutions

WEB LINKS

http://www.bathroute1study.org/
http://www.maine.gov/mdot-stage/

CONTACTS

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